



MARBELLA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY
CENTRE

Module Study Guide

Academic Year 2020–2021

Master Dissertation

Level: 7

Credits: 15 ECTS

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Key team contact details

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1 Module overview

1.1 Introduction

Each dissertation will be supervised by a relevant faculty advisor, and could be co-supervised by governmental, NGO or industry sponsors. The proposed research question will need to be approved by the supervisor and the course committee.

1.2 Module summary content and aims

The purpose of the Master Dissertation is for you to apply theoretical knowledge acquired during the course to a dissertation involving using actual data in a real-world setting. In this module, you will engage in identifying a research question, proposing a mechanism and solving it with real-world data. You will independently collect and process data and apply suitable and appropriate analytic methods to the problem. Since both the stated research question and the data for the project originate from real-world domains, which might be encountered within industry, government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or academic research, it is a great and crucial practice for you during your MA study.

1.3 Learning outcomes to be assessed

LO1. Develop a thorough understanding of the chosen research area, including familiarity with the current debates and the ability to identify gaps of knowledge.

LO2. Develop the ability to produce a clear and consistent research-based piece of work, including: the ability to produce a research design and put it into practice through the collection and critically interpretation of data; the ability to discuss the research findings at the light of previous literature and state conclusions, identifying limitations and possible future research lines

LO3. Recognise the importance of planning and preparation required to undertake a research project and develop an ability to work independently and effectively communicate knowledge in a scientific manner.

LO4. Develop the competence to use a holistic view to critically, independently and creatively formulate and deal with complex issues.

1.4 Indicative Contact Hours

Teaching Contact Hours	56 hours
Independent Study Hours	344 hours
Total Learning Hours	400 hours

1.5 Summative assessment grid

Type of Assessment	Word Count or equivalent	Threshold (if Professional Body-PSRB applies)	Weighting	Pass Mark	Indicative Submission week	Method of Submission & Date of Feedback (refer to NEOImS)
Dissertation	15000 (+/- 10%) words	n/a	100%	50	Week 13 (Date and time TBC)	Via NEOImS and email to registrar (registrar@miuc.org)

1.6 Assessment brief including criteria mapped to learning outcomes

Assessment 1: Master Dissertation

The Master Dissertation will be assessed by the Dissertation Committee, consisting of three subject specialists, working independently who will then meet to agree a mark.

Students are expected to:

- Have attended the Research Methods module.
- Have enrolled for the Dissertation module.
- Attend the meeting scheduled at the beginning of the semester to get introduced to the potential Master Dissertation supervisors and be actively engaged in the process of selecting one.
- Inform the Academic Office who their supervisor(s) will be.
- Supply the supervisor(s) ALL relevant contact details.
- Obtain approval of their Research Specification from the University Dissertation Counsel.
- Seek ethical approval for their Master Dissertation in Week 1 of the Spring Semester (for intake in Fall semester) or in Week 1 of the Fall semester (for intake in Spring semester).
- Assume ownership of their Dissertation and its progress from day 1.
- Work conscientiously and independently within the framework of guidance and support provided.
- Maintain progress and momentum in accordance with the agreed schedule.
- Present all work in word processed form.
- Provide to the supervisor electronically any work that is to be discussed in the scheduled supervisory session at least 4 working days before the meeting to allow for relevant discussion and comment.

- Notify supervisors as soon as possible should a problem arise about fulfilling an agreed appointment.
- Notify supervisors and course leader as soon as possible about illness, emergency or other problem which is likely to disrupt the agreed schedule.
- Arrive at the meetings ON TIME, well prepared and with a clear agenda for the meeting. Supervisors should be informed of the agenda before the meeting.
- Ensure that supervisors have seen the majority of the completed report before submission.
- Do not ask their supervisor to comment on the completed work in the week of submission. It is impossible for the supervisor to give timely feedback and for the student to carry out any amendments. If the student has followed the agreed schedule of work the supervisor will already have read the majority of their work and therefore will not need to re-read it all before submission.
- Ensure the complete draft of the Master Dissertation is submitted on time in order to receive feedback.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Informing Academic Office about the students they will be supervising.
- Initially contacting their students and arranging the first supervisory session.
- Establishing in conjunction with their students an outline timetable of work and agreeing respective milestones for completion of set tasks (as indicated in the log) based on the Research Proposal.
- Establishing a framework for further tutorials and supplying each student with a supervisory log which must be signed off after each session. Some tutorials may be conducted in group mode/learning set, at the discretion of the supervisor.
- Meeting with students at timely intervals.
- Giving assistance and direction in reviewing the topic and submitted work.
- Providing timely feedback on submitted work.
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of students.
- Giving early advice about the structure and methodology of the Dissertation and provide advice on relevant literature and other appropriate sources.
- Responding promptly to any problems that students may have in developing and writing their Master Dissertation.
- Providing feedback on one complete draft of the Master Dissertation if submitted on time.
- Proposing the three Dissertation Committee members who are experts in the field and obtaining the approval from the Academic Office.

Supervisors may expect students to:

- Take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties. It is a student as well as a supervisor responsibility to initiate contact and identify issues and concerns.
- Inform the supervisor of other people or organisations with whom they are discussing their work or contacting. Supervisory permission must be sought BEFORE any organisation is contacted.
- Recognise that supervisors have competing demands on their time and may not be

available for tutorials and commenting on written work at particular times.

- Arrange tutorial sessions across the research period, NOT only at the end.
- Recognise that tutorials cancelled at short notice cannot always be replaced.
- ALWAYS agree a time for a meeting do not just 'pop in' in the hope that the supervisor will be there or available to see them.

Oral Defence of the Master Dissertation

The supervisor and the Academic Office will designate the time and place of the Oral Defence of the Master Dissertation within Week 16 of Spring semester for intake in Fall Semester (Week 16 of Fall semester for intake in Spring semester). The supervisor and the Academic Office will then notify all members of the Dissertation Committee, as well as the student. The Oral Defence should be scheduled to allow a minimum of ten days for members of the Committee to review the Dissertation.

The duration of the Oral Defence is one hour, with 45-minutes for the student's presentation and 15-minutes for Questions & Answers session.

The Oral Defence should provide the Dissertation Committee a clear picture of the Master Dissertation, addressing the following topics:

- Dissertation title and students' name
- Overview or outline of the presentation
- Introduction (including the purpose of the work, research question, rationale and hypothesis, if any, and definition of key constructs)
- Theoretical framework, determining what theories and ideas exist in relation to the research question(s) and justifying the investigation
- Methodology (including research design, method, sample, and procedure)
- Results/Findings (including tables or figures summarising the findings)
- Discussion (including reasons for new or unexpected findings, contributions and limitations, and practical implications)
- Conclusion

For the 15-minute Q&A section after the presentation, there are some tips for the students to address the questions posed by the Dissertation Committee:

- Don't rush to any answers. It is acceptable to take time to think.
- Try to be concise and to the point and do not give superficial answers, but at the same time, do not go all over the map.
- Don't be defensive and be confident without being cocky. If the audience is able to point out some flaws or weaknesses in your work, accept their criticisms with gratitude since it will be beneficial for your Dissertation.

(A) Guidelines on the structure of the Master Dissertation

1. Title Page

The following information should be presented in this order with all text centred:

- The title of the Dissertation (not more than ten words) and sub-title, if any
- The name of the author
- The text "submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of - insert the title of your programme-"
- The name of the Dissertation supervisor(s)
- The text "Marbella International University Centre"
- The month and year of submission

2. Acknowledgements

This is the opportunity to mention individuals who have been particularly helpful. Reading the acknowledgements in other Dissertations in your field will give you an idea of the ways in which different kinds of help have been appreciated and mentioned by other authors. It is not necessary to acknowledge members of staff unless you wish to do so. However, assistance from individuals and organisations outside the university should be acknowledged.

3. Abstract (about 300 words)

A summary of the Dissertation, of no more than three hundred words, is required. This may be one of the shortest sections of your Dissertation, but it is worthwhile taking great care to write it well. Essentially, the Abstract is a succinct summary of the research. It should be able to stand alone in representing why and how you did what you did, and what the results and implications of your research are. Likewise, a list of a maximum of five keywords that best define the Dissertation have to be included. It can be best to write the Abstract last, once you are sure what exactly you are summarising. Alternatively, it can be useful to write a draft of the abstract earlier on, as an aid to identifying the crucial main thread of your research, its purpose, and its findings, which could then guide the structure of the Dissertation.

4. List of Contents

This should list in sequence, with page numbers, all sections of the Master Dissertation from Abstract to Appendices. If you are in any doubt as to how to do this, look at the Contents page in any textbook.

5. List of Tables and Figures

The lists of tables and figures (diagrams, graphs, illustrations) should follow the list of contents and each should have their own numbering sequence.

6. Introduction (about 2,500 words)

A clear introduction to the Dissertation, consisting of appropriate background information, including the broad definition of key terms, possible link to key debates / perspectives that are relevant to study, and organisational information if necessary. Of great importance is the clear and concise statement of research question(s) and aim(s), in such a way that the scope is narrow enough and the research is feasible. Likewise, it is key to provide a rationale for the research (why the research is relevant). Finally, the introduction does provide a summary of the content of the main chapters of the Master Dissertation.

7. Literature Review (about 3,000 words)

The literature review chapter critically reviews key themes/issues relevant to your research topic and research aim, drawing on references to academic literature as appropriate. It presents a logical, detailed and coherent picture of what literature tells us about your selected research topic. Specifically, it weaves together analysis of some or all of the following, funnelling down from a broad to specific analysis of the issues relevant to your Master Dissertation. From this literature review you identify a gap in knowledge, key issues, themes and/or raise questions about your topic which requires collection of new data to provide answers to these questions and/or fill the research gap.

8. Methodology (about 3,000 words)

This chapter is intended to explain and justify all aspects of the chosen research design, including research epistemology (i.e. interpretivist, positivist...), methods (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods), sample, data collection instruments (i.e. interview, observation, questionnaire...), data analysis methods, ethical considerations, and limitations.

9. Results / Findings (about 2,000 words)

Presentation of the salient findings which have been reached after the corresponding analysis of the information collected in an attempt to address the research question(s). This section will vary considerably in both content and length depending on the nature of the topic. For example, findings can be presented in the form of: extracts/quotations from interviews and focus groups; comparative/descriptive statistics from questionnaires that are described and

displayed in graphs, pie charts, tables etc.; results of different statistical tests or mathematical models/formulae; extracts from series of newspaper articles reporting on a specific issue, etc. Raw data, if appropriate, should be presented in Appendices.

10. Discussion (about 3,500 words)

It addresses again the research question(s) and encompasses an interpretation of the findings through critical comparison of it with existing work that had been addressed in the literature review that explored definitions, relevant theories, models, major themes/debates and other previous research. Likewise, it includes broader theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

11. Conclusion (about 700 words)

This section should provide a summary of the Master Dissertation, highlighting the key findings and implications, point out the limitations of the research undergone, and also include and recommendations and suggestions for further research and/or practice.

12. References

List all the references which appear in the text in alphabetical order by the authors' surnames.

11. Appendices

These are to be used sparingly. Separate appendices are to be used for different sets of detailed information that would not be appropriate to include in the main text of the Dissertation. For instance:

- Reproduction of a questionnaire used
- Details of a population sampled
- List of organisations sampled
- Relevant extracts from standard tables (with acknowledgement of source)
- Raw or gross data from surveys summarised in the text

Supervision Meeting Records must be included in appendices.

Appendices **MUST NOT** include brochures, pamphlets, etc. obtained from organisations. The only unlikely exception would be where you are investigating specifically the design of the brochures themselves. Similarly, extracts from other articles, etc. must not be reproduced.

(B) Guidelines on the format of the Master Dissertation

1. Pagination

All pages, including tables, etc. and appendices should be numbered consecutively throughout the Master Dissertation.

2. Section Heading

It is helpful to use section headings in each chapter. The hierarchy and system of numbering chapter and section headings should be consistent.

3. Tables and Figures

Where these are used, they should, as far as possible, be given the same margins as a page of text and bound in the Dissertation as near as possible to the relevant passage. Material which cannot be bound in this way should be contained in a pocket inside the back cover. Tables and figures should be numbered separately in the order of their presentation.

4. Referencing

Harvard style of referencing will be used. Detailed guidelines are available in Library section in Blackboard.

5. Quotations

If a quotation from any source is included, it must be an exact copy of the original text and quotation marks must indicate where the quotation begins and ends. At the end of the quotation, which should be indented from the main text, the author, date of publication and page reference must be given, as follows: "The research findings suggest that style alone is not the answer to effective leadership" (Handy, 1976, p 93).

6. Abbreviations

Only recognised abbreviations should be used and each should be given in brackets, on the first occasion, e.g. Department of the Environment (DOE). You may wish to provide a separate list of abbreviations.

7. Style of writing

- Clear, simple language should be used.
- When an ordinary word is used in a technical or special sense, explain its meaning briefly.
- A general rule for numbers in the body of the text is that, up to ten, they are expressed in words (one, six) and above ten in figures (124, 1,762). However, 'one hundred', 'five thousand', 'ten million' etc. are expressed in words.
- Use paragraphs as an aid to develop an argument. As a rule, paragraphs

are often about one-third to half a page in length.

- The Master Dissertation should normally be written in the past tense. In quantitative research it is widely spread using the third person singular passive (e.g. “A questionnaire was sent to all local authority leisure departments” rather than “I sent questionnaires to”), but this is not always the case when reporting qualitative research, when the first person singular/plural is also used.

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria for Assessment (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4 will be assessed)

These assessments will be marked according to the following criteria:

Section	Weighting
Introduction	10%
Literature Review	20%
Methodology	25%
Results and discussion	25%
Conclusion	10%
Overall coherence and presentation	10%

INTRODUCTION (10%)

MARKING CRITERIA
Appropriate background information has been provided, including all special terms, definitions and rationale (what you are doing and why?)?
Are the research aim and objectives, research questions (or hypothesis) clear, relevant and achievable?
Do aims, objectives etc. go beyond mere description i.e. do they involve explanation, comparison, criticism or evaluation?
Does the introduction indicate the content of the other chapters?

MARKING GRID					
70 - 100%	60 - 69%	50 - 59%	40 - 49%	20 - 39%	0 - 19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive background information, definitions and rationale. Research aims, objectives and appropriate research questions / hypotheses are effectively synthesised. Has detailed critique of how they were arrived at and potential issues. Detailed but succinct identification of content of remaining chapters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good background information, definitions and rationale. Clearly identifies aim, objectives and research questions / hypotheses. Partial critique of aim, objectives and research questions/hypotheses and potential issues. Adequate identification of content of remaining chapters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some good background information but lacking in some aspects. Identifies aim, objectives and research questions /hypotheses but lacking detail in some aspects. Lacking a clear rationale of how they were derived. Adequate but not succinct identification of content of remaining chapters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background information has some relevance but is lacking in some key aspects. Adequate identification of research area(s) but questions/hypotheses not well articulated or poorly explained. Limited explanation of how they were derived Some indication of content of remaining chapters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does give some indication of research areas but very limited background information. Lacks adequate identification of aim, objectives and research questions / hypotheses. Very limited explanation of how they were derived. Limited indication of content of further chapters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrelevant or very limited background information. Does not identify aim and / or objectives and / or research questions / hypotheses. No explanation of how they were derived. No indication of content of the remaining chapters.

LITERATURE REVIEW (20%)

MARKING CRITERIA
Has a comprehensive range of relevant academic literature, pertinent to the aim and research question(s) of the Dissertation or is the impression given that current relevant academic literature on or around the problem has been included?
Does it attempt to compare and contrast a number of relevant concepts, models or theories in a critical manner or is it merely descriptive?
Are the key themes and issues surrounding the research question(s) clearly drawn from the literature?
Are the sources used up to date, where appropriate and do they have sufficient academic weight? Have sources been acknowledged and referenced fairly and properly? Is the reference section at the end of the Dissertation complete and in the appropriate version of the Harvard System?

MARKING GRID					
70 - 100%	60 - 69%	50 - 59%	40 - 49%	20 - 39%	0 - 19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive appraisal of relevant literature. • Critical appraisal of relevant literature. • Research question and the literature are synthesized and critical approach is evident. • Bibliography wide ranging and correct in all aspects. • Citations are correct and appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive appraisal of relevant literature. • High level of critical appraisal. • Related to research questions. • Bibliography wide ranging but with minor errors Citations mainly correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate appraisal of mostly relevant literature. • Some critical appraisal. • Not always relevant to research questions. • Bibliography wide ranging but with some errors. • Citations correct but some errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate discussion of some relevant literature. • Tends towards the descriptive with very limited critical appraisal. • Some relevance to research questions. • Bibliography limited and with some errors. • Some citations correct but a number of errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature is limited in scope or irrelevant. • Little appraisal and very descriptive. • Limited relevance to research questions. • Bibliography limited with many errors. • A large number of citation errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor and limited use of literature. • Vague understanding of relevance of literature. • Student appears to have relied heavily on too few texts. • Bibliography very limited and does not adhere to the Harvard System. • No or very few citations used.

METHODOLOGY (25%)

MARKING CRITERIA
<p>Is there a clear rationale for the methodology i.e. is the student aware of the nature and types of research e.g. are distinctions between qualitative and quantitative, positivist and interpretative methods addressed?</p> <p>Have the alternatives been discussed and have the advantages and disadvantages of chosen methods been evaluated? Has this understanding informed their choice of approach?</p> <p>Is the methodology described appropriate for the data required?</p>
<p>Is the research methodology described fully so that it could be replicated? I.e.</p> <p>Are the research instruments well designed with all the research question(s) etc. relevant to the research aims?</p> <p>Are sampling methods described in detail in relation to sampling i.e. who are the respondents; how many are there; why and how were they selected?</p> <p>Is there evidence of care and accuracy in the data collection process?</p> <p>Are data analysis methods discussed?</p>
<p>Are reliability and validity issues addressed?</p> <p>Has the methodology been evaluated in retrospect with suggestions for improvement if the research were to be undertaken again?</p>

MARKING GRID					
70 - 100%	60 - 69%	50 - 59%	40 - 49%	20 - 39%	0 - 19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a very clear synthesis of academic rationale for methodology and research approach. • Methods highly relevant to purpose with evidence of exploring alternative methods and choices well justified. • Sampling correct in all aspects and clearly explained. • Critical evaluation. • Overall approach very well planned and executed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a clear synthesis of academic rationale for methodology and research approach but perhaps not always well articulated. • Methods largely relevant to purpose with evidence of exploring alternative methods but incomplete justification. • All elements of sampling theory addressed with some being well done. • Evaluation may lack a critical approach in some aspects. • Generally, well planned and executed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some academic rationale for methodology/ approach but lacking detail in areas. • Methods not relevant to purpose in all aspects but has some good aspects. Justification for choice is limited. • All elements of sampling theory adequately addressed. • Evaluation has been attempted but is limited in terms of a critical approach. • There may be shortcomings in the planning and execution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited methodological rationale. • Methods have some relevance to purpose but have been insufficiently planned and executed. Justification for choice is very limited. • Sampling theory addressed but limited with omissions. • Evaluation is attempted and applied but is poor. • Overall planning and execution weak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic rationale for methodology. • Methods are mainly irrelevant to purpose or are poorly explained and difficult to understand. • Sampling theory extremely weak and lacking detail. • Limited evaluation with very little actual application. • Poorly planned and executed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No attempt at rationale for methodology. • Describes processes that do not relate to the purpose. • No sampling theory discussed. • No or very limited and vague evaluation. • Execution fails to achieve minimum standard required.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION (25%)

MARKING CRITERIA
Is the information presented relevant to the aims and objectives?
Does any table or graph presented make the most of the data collected? Is any qualitative data categorised and presented systematically?
Are the findings presented clearly and interestingly for the reader to follow? i.e. is diagrammatic representation of data e.g. tables, charts etc embedded in the text?
Are the appendices used appropriately for bulky and/or less interesting/essential data? FOR QUESTIONNAIRES. Do the appendices contain a data summary sheet, a summary questionnaire and details of statistical analysis undertaken? FOR INTERVIEWS. Do the appendices contain data collected and analysed such as interview transcripts? FOR OBSERVATIONS. Do the appendices contain back up data on observations carried out?
Is the most relevant data clearly summarised, discussed and evaluated?
Have patterns in the data been identified and/or key variables compared and relationships highlighted?
Are all statements discussed in context and supported by the data?
Have the findings of the primary research been compared and contrasted with findings, theories, models or concepts derived from the literature review? Is the synthesis effective?

MARKING GRID					
70 - 100%	60 - 69%	50 - 59%	40 - 49%	20 - 39%	0 - 19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and unambiguous presentation of data. • Relevant, rigorous and thorough analysis. • Very critical discussion and evaluation of findings. • Effective synthesis of findings and literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear presentation of data with few errors. • Relevant and thorough analysis. • Good discussion and evaluation of findings. • Good synthesis to the literature but some omissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally clear presentation of data but some errors. • Relevant analysis but lacks thorough approach. • Discussion and evaluation of findings lacks rigour but some useful findings. • Clear but partial linkage to the literature but many omissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of data is limited or lacks clarity. • Analysis is basic and pedantic in many areas. • Discussion and evaluation is superficial or relies on unsupported assertions. • Attempts linkage to the literature but not in a clear manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear or confusing presentation of data. • Analysis is basic and pedantic in all areas. • Discussion and evaluation very limited or shows lack of understanding of evidence collected. • Minimal linkage to the literature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much or all of the data has been presented in an unclear manner. • No analysis or trivial. • No or very limited discussion of findings. • No or very weak linkage to the literature.

CONCLUSION (10%)

MARKING CRITERIA
Do the conclusions follow on from the findings? Are the conclusions well-grounded in the evidence and arguments presented?
Have the aim, objectives and research questions been clearly reviewed and addressed?
Are the conclusions discussed in context and are they applicable to a wider scenario?

MARKING GRID					
70 - 100%	60 - 69%	50 - 59%	40 - 49%	20 - 39%	0 - 19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusions valid and consistent with analysis. Comprehensive reference to aim, objectives and research questions. Conclusions discussed in detail and context and recognised applicable to wider scenario. For work-based Dissertation recommendations are consistent with findings and conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusions valid and generally consistent with analysis. Good reference to aim, objectives and research questions. Conclusions discussed in context and recognised briefly that applicable to a wider. For work-based Dissertation some logical recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusions generally valid and partially consistent with analysis. Some reference to aim, objectives and research questions. Conclusions discussed in context and some recognition of wider application. For work-based Dissertation some recommendations but may be questionable based on findings and conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some valid conclusions but generally inconsistent with analysis. Limited reference to aim, objectives and research questions. Conclusions briefly discussed in context and wider context. For work-based Dissertation limited recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No obvious conclusions drawn or they are inconsistent with analysis. Very little attention to aim, objectives and research questions. Conclusions very briefly discussed in context. For work-based Dissertation very few appropriate recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusions do not relate to purpose. No attention to aim, objectives and the research questions. Conclusions not discussed in context. For work-based Dissertation no recommendations

OVERALL COHERENCE & PRESENTATION (10%)

MARKING CRITERIA
Is the overall style and presentation in accordance with that specified in the Guidelines? And particularly: Standard title page; length 15,000 words (with a 10% tolerance either way); correct pagination; chapter and section headings; tables and figures numbered correctly
Is the contents page clear, concise and logically numbered?
Are appendices, tables and figures listed and appropriately referred to?
Has the Dissertation been spell and grammar checked?
Is the Oral Defence clear to the audience?
Are the answers to the questions in Q&A clear and convincing?

MARKING GRID					
70 - 100%	60 - 69%	50 - 59%	40 - 49%	20 - 39%	0 - 19%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfils all requirements and follows an acceptable style in a correct manner. Easy to read and leads the reader along a well-argued path. Has an overall coherence. Students are enthusiastic and engaged in a delivery that makes the audience want to listen; uses very effective ways of conveying information, concepts and ideas; communicates difficult ideas in a clear and intelligible way; perceptive and interesting responses in discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfils most requirements and follows an acceptable style in a generally correct manner. Presented so that it is easy for reader to follow. Is generally coherent although it may lack coherence in parts. Clearly delivered presentation that shows an ability to engage directly with the audience; effective in conveying information, ideas and concepts to the audience; clear and informed but basic responses in discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to follow an acceptable style and fulfils most of the requirements. Not presented with maximum clarity and sometimes difficult to follow the argument. A coherent presentation but with some omissions or lack of clarity in the presentation of concepts and ideas; relatively clear delivery conveying some ideas and information with some audience engagement; clear but basic and limited responses in discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, attempts to conform to requirements and adequately executed. Some aspects of presentation unclear. Has limited coherence. Sufficient defined structure and little or adequate preparation; sufficient delivered conveying adequate but limited ideas and information with some audience engagement; basic and limited responses in discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet some of the key requirements. Fails to follow an acceptable style and some aspects unclear. Very little coherence. Little defined structure and little or inadequate preparation; poorly delivered presentation with little engagement with the audience; responses to questions were incomplete and muddled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet many of the key requirements Fails to follow an acceptable style and often unclear and untidy. No coherence Failure to carry out the task assigned; rambling and unstructured content; no preparation; poor delivery and no engagement with the audience; answers to questions were irrelevant or flippant. A mark of 0 indicates an unexplained absence from a scheduled performance.

For guidance on online submission of assignments, including how to submit and how to access online feedback, please refer to the MIUC lms student guideline.

1.7 Learning materials

The reading list for this module is available on lms in the module area

1.7.1. Core textbook(s):

Reading will depend on the research questions selected by the students and will be recommended by the supervisor(s) and MIUC librarian.

1.7.2. Other recommended reading:

a) Other recommended readings on research methods

- Hammond, M. & Wellington, J. (2013) *Research Methods: The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge [Available in MIUC Library].
- Horn, T. S. (2011) 'Multiple pathways to knowledge generation: qualitative and quantitative research approaches in sport and exercise psychology', *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 3(3), pp. 291-304. doi: 10.1080/2159676X.2011.607181
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. & Leech, N.L. (2005) 'On Becoming a Pragmatic Researcher: The Importance of Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(5), pp. 375–387. doi: 10.1080/13645570500402447

b) Other recommended readings on academic writing

- Bailey, S. (2015) *Academic writing for international students of business*. 3rd ed. New York. Routledge [Available in MIUC Library].
- Belmont, W., & Sharkey, M. (2011) *The Easy Writer: Formal Writing for Academic Purposes*. 3rd ed. Frenchs Forest, Australia: Pearson [Available in MIUC Library].
- Lunsford, A. A. (2016) *The Everyday Writer with Exercises with 2016 MLA Update*. 8th ed. London, UK: Macmillan [Available in MIUC Library].

c) Other recommended readings on writing research papers

- Lester, J. D., & Lester, J. D. (2015) *Writing research papers: A complete guide*. 5th edition. London, UK: Pearson [Available in MIUC Library].
- Wang, G. T., & Park, K. (2016) *Student research and report writing: from topic selection to the complete paper*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons [Available in MIUC Library].

1.7.3. Other resources:

Below there is a list of webpages related to the content of the module that might be of interest for students.

Center for Social Research Methods

<https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/>

Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research

<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ciej20/current>

International Association of Social Science Research

<http://iassr2.org/>

Journal of Social Science Research

<https://cirworld.com/index.php/jssr>

Social Research Association (UK)

<http://the-sra.org.uk/>

Social Science Research Council

<https://www.ssrc.org/>

Social Science Research (journal)

<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/social-science-research/>

Remember to log into MIUC Ims daily to receive all the latest news and support available at your module sites!

2 Things you need to know

2.1 Engagement

During the academic year 2020-21, the health, welfare and safety of all our students and staff is our top priority as Spain continues to deal with the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Face to-face-teaching, access to MIUC facilities and being part of our unique University community are key parts of the excellent student experience at MIUC. We have been working to create a safe and efficient plan that will allow us to deliver these elements when you start with us in the fall semester, subject to government regulation.

MIUC will be ready to teach in September and we are committed to engaging with you as closely as we can, and to ensuring that you have a rich educational experience that is safe and protected to ensure that you continue to get the most from the University life and the city of Marbella.

Whether you are engaging with teaching and learning activities on site or via the MIUC Virtual Learning Environment, we expect the same level of commitment and engagement from you. If you are unable to attend scheduled on site or online activities or complete activities in the timeframes set out, you should let your module leaders know. You should aim to stick to assessment deadlines; if you are concerned that you will not be able to complete your assessments on time, you should talk to your module leaders. Your engagement, whether online or on site, will be tracked and if we see that you are not engaging, we will get in contact with you. However, we encourage you to let us know if you are struggling so we can work with you to find solutions and get you back on track as soon as possible. Give yourself the best possible chance to succeed by engaging with the full range of learning and teaching activities available to you.

2.2 Need help, just ask

The University recognises that there are times when you may encounter difficulties during your course of study and provisions are made to help you. If you are struggling with meeting deadlines please talk to us, whether it's your course/module leader, personal tutor or any member of staff, speak to them so they can get you the support you need to succeed. You can extend your deadline if you have a good reason why you are not able to submit a piece of coursework on time, [apply online for an extension](#) before your deadline. An extension will allow you an extra 10 working days. If an extension is not sufficient and circumstances beyond your control are preventing you from completing your assessment, then you can, [apply online for mitigation](#).

Please remember late submission without extension or mitigation will result in penalties depending on how late it is, see [Academic Regulations](#).

You are reminded that MIUC applies penalties to students who commit an academic offence, in which case the Academic Offences Regulations will be used to deal with any cases of academic misconduct including examination offences, plagiarism and other means of cheating to obtain an advantage.

You are encouraged to seek advice from the Students' Union and counselling service which support you with all aspects of your academic experience by providing advice and guidance to ensure you are fully informed of the academic regulations as well as advocate for student views.

You are expected to behave in line with University expectations, irrespective of whether your interactions with staff and other students are in person or online. As you will be engaging with others online and a range of online materials, it is important to consider how to stay safe online and ensure your communications are secure and appropriate. If you have any questions about how to manage

your online activities, please contact your module leader.

If you have an issue about the module, you should speak to your Module Leader or Course Leader informally in the first instance. Your Course Representative can also raise your concerns at Course Committees, which take place each semester. If you are unable to resolve it informally, you should refer to the Complaints Procedure which is outlined in the student handbook and consult the Students' Union about it. The University aims to ensure that issues are resolved informally as quickly as possible to have minimum impact on your studies.

2.3 Getting support for your studies

Throughout your course of study, you will have access to a wide variety of sources of support depending on your individual circumstances and needs. Your first point of call for getting general academic support is your Personal Tutor. As well as approaching your Module Leader with any questions specifically related to your module and your Course Leader with questions on your Course, do contact your Personal Tutor for academic advice in relation your studies and your academic development.

Apart from the University-wide support framework, which encompasses the Module Leaders, Course Leader, the Subject Librarian and your Course Administrator, you will also have at your disposal the MIUC Academic Support Team. The Team offers Academic Skills Workshops throughout the year, helping you to develop skills relevant to your degree. Workshops include for instance Essay Planning and Writing; Critical Thinking; Reflective Writing; Group Work and Presentation Skills.

English Language support and One-to-one academic support opportunities are also available. For information about all these services, please consult the Academic Office.

2.4 Student support

In addition to the support listed in the previous section, there is also more help offered by MIUC Student services, consisting of Student Life Department, Internship Support, Life Coaching Service and Counselling service. They offer a wide range of support and services consisting of extracurricular activities; Careers and internship support; Student Welfare and Counselling.

Contact Student Services for more information at:

Student Life Department: student.life@miuc.org

Internship Support: [TBC](#)

Life Coaching Service: Ms. Ana Cantele, ana.cantle@miuc.org

Counselling Service: Ms. Eva Berkovic, eva@miuc.org

2.5 Module evaluation – have your say!

Towards the end of the module you will be invited to provide some anonymous feedback to the Module Leader through a (online) survey. This is your opportunity to give some direct feedback about the module through a series of questions and free text. Your constructive feedback will help the Module Leader and teaching team to understand the module experience from your perspective and helps inform the development of the module.

3.1 Research ethics guidance for students

3.1.1 What is research ethics? Why it matters

You will be asked to seek ethical approval for all your research projects undertaken in the course of your studies. Research ethics provides a framework for conducting research that might range from a short questionnaire devised by an undergraduate student through to a multi-million-pound project carried out by a group of professional researchers. All researchers, across all disciplines, should be mindful of ethical issues when planning, conducting, and reporting on their work.

Research ethics works to preserve the safety and rights of research participants in addition to safeguarding the well-being and integrity of the researcher, and the trustworthiness of the research. The University does not adhere to the principles of research ethics in order to prevent research taking place, but to facilitate good research; respecting the interests of all parties, mitigating risks to participants and researcher, and delivering research outcomes that are robust.

Surely some types of research raise more ethical issues than others?

Yes. Typically, research that involves the following would raise ethical issues:

- human subjects,
- vulnerable individuals or groups,
- personal data,
- any type of clinical/physical intervention,
- when conducted in a sensitive or potentially dangerous location, or
- security sensitive information

These ethical issues require appropriate planning in the design of the research to identify and mitigate the risks to the participant or researcher.

Interviewing your peers or friends on certain issues to do a research project is, for example, a typical case where ethical approval is required. Desk-based research centred on journal articles and books would be unlikely to pose acute ethical issues, except in relation to the way the researcher might select the articles, and report on their findings.

In any case, no research should be undertaken without research-ethics approval.

How can I understand and apply research ethics?

First and foremost, research ethics will be addressed by your tutor or supervisor as part of your module. It may also be part of your recommended reading. Different disciplines conduct a range of research using a variety of approaches, so your teaching will cover ethical issues that are most likely to apply to your subject. If you have any questions about the design or conduct of research that you are planning, then you should seek the guidance of the tutor responsible for the module.

Secondly, Research Ethics Risk Assessment system employs a *Research-ethics and integrity risk assessment form* that you are required to complete before commencing your project. This easy-to-complete assessment form helps the University to identify and improve research projects that might

raise ethical issues. Just as importantly, it will help you work through the potential ethical dimensions of your research in a structured step-by-step way.

My research does not involve any of the above issues?

You will still need to complete the *Research-ethics and integrity risk assessment form* before commencing your project.

Applying for ethics approval – a link to the ‘Research-ethics and integrity risk assessment form’ can be downloaded from MIUC Ims.

3.2 Easy steps to ethical approval

- Remember, the ethics application form **must** be submitted and approved **before** any research project starts and **before** any potential participants are approached.
- Make sure you have discussed any possible ethical issues with your Supervisor/Tutor/Module Leader before submitting your application. **You need your Supervisor’s/Module Leader’s/Tutor’s approval before getting started with the online approval.**
- The ‘Research ethics and integrity risk assessment form’ can be accessed on MIUC Ims.

At various points you will be asked to provide complementary documents. **Your application cannot be processed without these. You are advised to first type your project description (this is good practice for all applications and research proposals generally).** Make sure you include the following where your project utilises these research methods and instruments (A and B compulsory for all projects):

- A. The completed risk assessment form
 - B. A completed *Project Proposal*
 - C. A participant-information sheet
 - D. An informed-consent form
 - E. A copy of interview questions and/or the questionnaires/instruments you intend to use **or**, if you do not have these questionnaires/instruments, a statement of what will be used (in MS Word, with your application ID at the top)
 - F. A data management and storage statement
- } Discuss these with your supervisor since details may vary according to project

How it works

1. The School/College Ethics Panel will review your application – **this is normally within two weeks of submission**
2. **You and your supervisor** will be informed of the outcome by email
3. Outcomes will be one of the following categories:
 - **Conditional** approval subject to review and re-submission (you must make the changes specified by the panel before you can start)
 - **Provisional** approval subject to additional information and re-submission (you can start your project, but you will need to provide further information at a date determined by the School/College Ethics Panel)
 - **Final** approval (the approval is final, and you do not need to re-submit unless you make subsequent changes to the project)
 - **Rejection** (you must discuss issues raised with your Supervisor)

- **Referral** to University Research Ethics Committee where risk is identified that requires such referral.